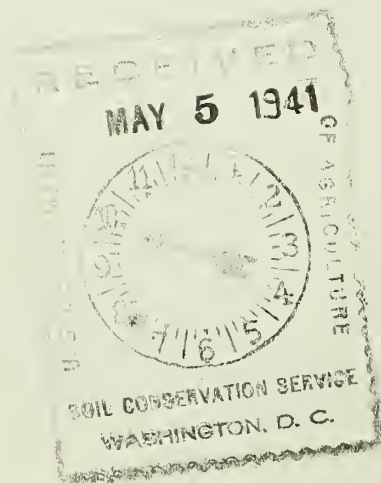


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WLW
CINCINNATI

FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

1:15
P.M. - E.S.T.

A SERIES OF DRAMATIZATIONS OF BETTER LAND USE.

No. 159

"LAND OF THE LIMBERLOST"

May 10, 1941

ORGAN THEME: DEEP RIVER

VOICE

We took it for granted that land was everlasting;

We said ownership of the land insured security.

Tools would wear out, men would die --

But the land would remain.

ORGAN: ABRUPT DISCORD

ANNOUNCER (cold)

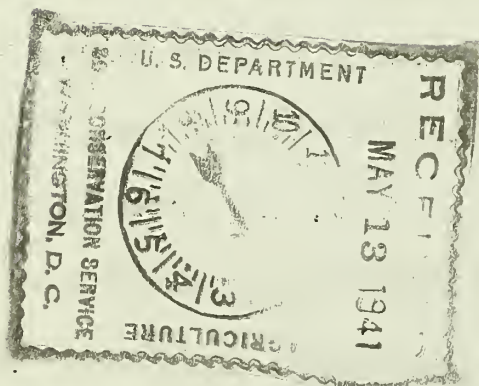
Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: DEEP RIVER

ANNOUNCER

Motorists wending their way through Northern Indiana may notice odd looking buildings with a chimney at the side, may scent a pungent aroma, may see racks filled with green, hay-like material. This is the land of peppermint. Mint, a perennial herb is widely distributed all over the world with many varieties and many uses. Each species, whether it be horse-mint, apple-mint, fish-mint, or corn-mint, contains an aromatic oil. Mint sauce is made from spearmint, menthol from peppermint -- and the land of peppermint is the scene of the 159th consecutive episode of "Fortunes Washed Away."

ORGAN. UP AND OUT



ANNOUNCER

Noble County leads Indiana in mint production, and typical of Noble County farmers is Fred Geiger, whose 80-acre farm is in the "Long Swamp" territory -- land of the Limberlost.

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC MUSIC BEHIND

VOICE OF THE LIMBERLOST

The Limberlost -- land of beauty, where soft, slow clouds peer down from the blue sky into the mighty trees, the swinging vines, bright flowers and the cold dark swamp. The Limberlost -- a great swamp that stretches in unbroken swale, underbrush and trees -- a profusion of flowers, birds and animals. But if the trees are cleared, if the swamp is drained, what will happen to the land?

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

Four years ago, Fred Geiger had to make a decision. He was talking with his father one day....(fade)

FRED

That's how I feel about it, Dad. I want a farm of my own.

FATHER

I know, Fred...but you don't need to go away from here. You'll inherit this farm someday -- our only child.

FRED

Maybe so, but I'd rather make my own way. I guess I'm noted for doing crazy things.

FATHER

You are that. Why, that's the reason we moved to this farm in the first place. When we lived in the city you ran off so much we just had to get out here. And now you want to leave.

FRED

Yes, I do, Dad.

FATHER

But your whole life is built around this farm, now. Why, look at those Norway spruce trees you set out. My, I remember how folks laughed at you...

FRED

So do I.

FATHER

They said you'd be an old man before you'd get any good out of them. And the time you first started plowing...

FRED (chuckling)

I'll never forget that.

FATHER

Neither will I. I can see you yet....up there on that clay land. The horses just went any way they wanted to.

FRED

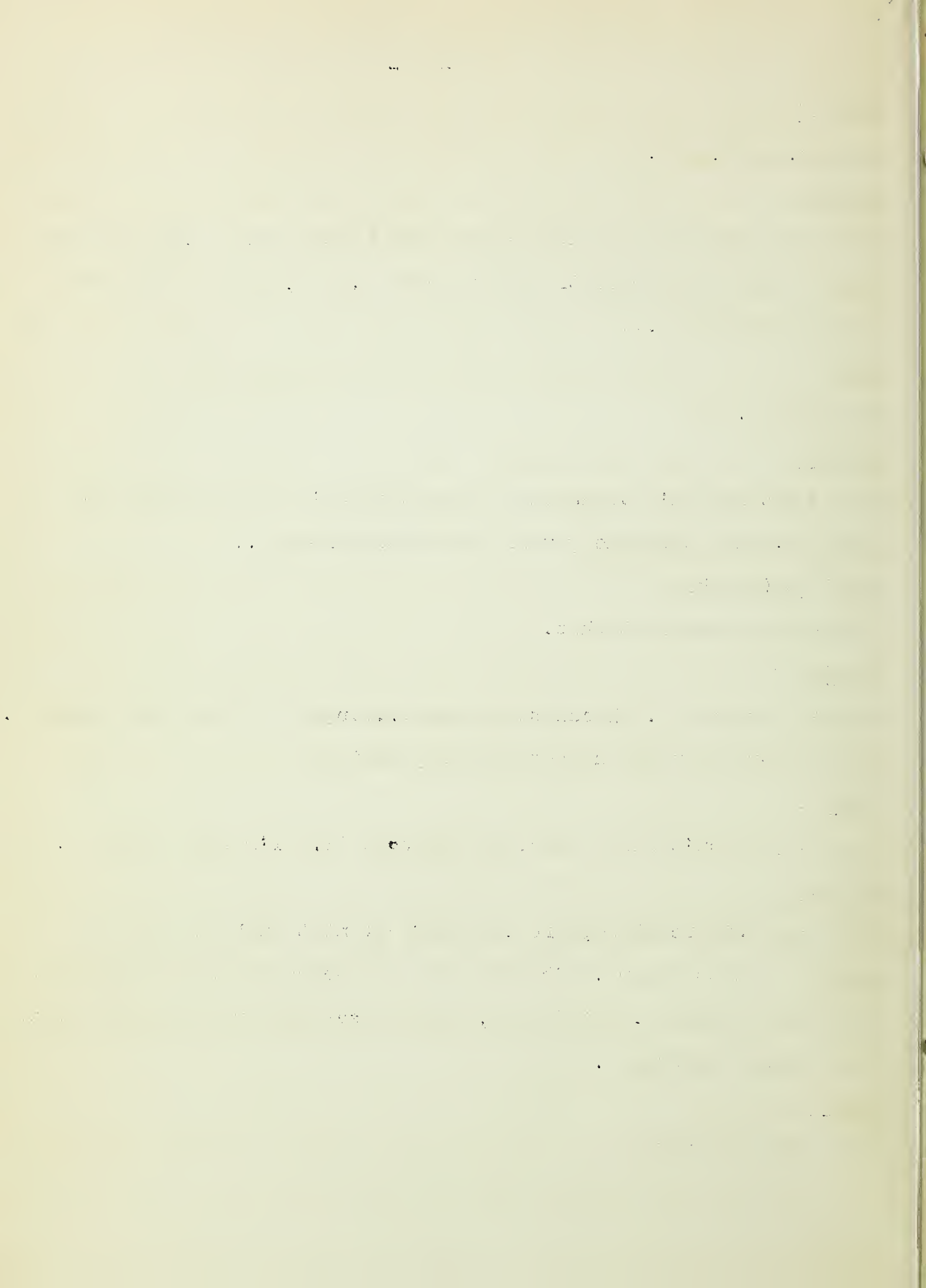
Yeah, I don't like the clay land so well. I'm for muck land.

FATHER

We've got muck land, Fred. The first mint in Noble County was grown on this farm. Chamberlain boys brought the roots over from Lagrange County. And mint, my boy, saved your life when you were only 18 months old.

FRED

Oh? How was that?



FATHER

You were sick a long time, son. The doctor and your mother and I had tried everything we know to cure you. Finally we gave you some peppermint oil, and, son, it saved your life. Oh, don't you see, Fred, your life is wrapped around this farm.

FRED

Dad, I don't mean to be ungrateful -- but my life is with Retta now. I want a farm of my own, for my wife and myself.

FATHER (huskily)

All right, my boy. Good luck.

ORGAN: Symbolic Music Behind

VOICE OF THE LIMBERLOST

Land of the Limberlost -- masses of wild roses, the swale rocking in the summer breeze, sweetest of the blooms, where birds sing and squirrels bark, where sun sifts down gently through the massive crowns of the larch and the tamarack, the white oak and red maple. But if the trees are cleared, if the swamp is drained, what will happen to the land?

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

SOUND: Hailstorm just coming to halt...

SOUND: Door opens and closes....

RETTA

Oh, Fred, I was so worried about you! Out there in all that hailstorm! Are you all right?

FRED (laughing)

Sure I'm all right. But I'm cured of one thing -- that's the last time I'll ever try to run a "distil" out in the open.

RETTA

You'll have to build a shed for the distillery.

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FRED

I'll say I will. I didn't have anything bigger than a crow's nest to get under. But I'll say this much, we're getting a nice run of oil.

RETTA

That's encouraging. My, how we laughed at this farm when we moved here. "Justamuck Farm", you called it.

FRED

And that's about all it still is. It's still got a bad name among the neighbors.

RETTA

I don't care -- and I don't care if we did have to borrow the money for the down payment. We're young! Our future is ahead of us.

FRED

Life on "Justamuck Farm." I like it, Retta. Muck farming is fine -- if you take care of the land. And that reminds me, I'd better plan to build some windbreaks to stop the soil blowing. They're not only good against wind erosion, but the mint does better with protection -- get's an earlier start.

RETTA

Fred, do you suppose we'll ever get the same price for peppermint oil they did the year of the big blowout? Your father said it was so expensive the mint oil was stored in bank vaults.

FRED

I doubt it, and I'll tell you why. That one dust storm made a lot of folks wake up. They realize, now, they have to take care of the land, here in the Limberlost country.

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC MUSIC BEHIND

VOICE OF THE LIMBERLOST

Land of the Limberlost --

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VOICE OF THE LIMBERLOST

Land of the Limberlost -- with the damp mucky odor of the swamp,
the swamp aglow with life. Chubby little ground-hogs scudding on
the trail, young muskrats swimming across the lagoons, white pines
and red maples giving shelter to baby coons and possum -- land of
wild grapes and black haws, red-winged blackbirds and bobolinks.

But if the trees are cleared, ^{if the swamps are drained,} what will happen to the land?

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

SOUND: Man sawing wood...

RETTA (fading in)

Oh, Fred, here's that letter you were expecting.

FRED

Which one? Oh, the check. All right, Retta, you and I will just
take a little vacation and go to Farmer's Week at Purdue.

RETTA

Do you think we ought to?

FRED

We're going to! I tell you, Retta, "Justamuck Farm" is paying
dividends.

RETTA

I've noticed one thing -- people don't laugh at it like they used to

FRED

That's human nature, I guess. If a man has a lemon he has lots
of company, but if he has something good, nobody pays him much
attention.

1997 10/10/97

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RETTA

I suppose so. Anyhow, peppermint saved your life once, and now it's building ours. I haven't said much, Fred, but I've watched your farming operations with a lot of interest. I've seen you work and plan -- just like you are here. Every bit of wood you use in the distillery, you get off the place -- but you're always mighty careful to see that the woods are handled right.

FRED

All farming operations should be that way. All this farm needed was someone to feed the soil, and that's what I try to do. Men have hunted ducks and rode boats over this same land. Now it's rich muck soil. The Limberlost is gone now, Retta. The "Big Swamp" is gone. The trees have been cleared, the swamp has been drained -- and we've got farmland. It's a challenge to you, to me, to every American farmer to keep that farmland good.

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC MUSIC BEHIND

VOICE OF THE LIMBERLOST

Land of the Limberlost. The Limberlost is gone, now. Gone are the trees, gone the white lilies and the white herons that fished among them, gone the fall berries and the masses of wild roses. The trees have been cleared, the swamp has been drained, and what will happen to the land? It's a challenge to every American farmer to keep that farmland good.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

That is the true story of Fred Geiger, and the peppermint industry of Noble County, Indiana. And now, once again we turn to the United States Department of Agriculture, and speaking for the Soil Conservation Service is Ewing Jones.

JONES

Thanks, _____. The thing that impressed me most about Fred Geiger is the sincere, realistic way he looks at this problem of soil erosion. He's just a young man, but he's already had plenty of experience. And tourists driving along the highway in front of his home see more than just a big sign, "Justamuck Farm." They see a well-kept, orderly homestead, and well-kept, orderly fields. Well, C. E. McKibbin, superintendent of the CCC camp at Kendallville, is well acquainted with conditions in Noble County, so I'm going to ask him to tell us a little about the work the camp is doing, and how peppermint farmers handle their soil. Mac?

McKIBBIN

First, Ewing, I don't think we should give the impression that Fred Geiger has the best farm in the country.

JONES

Oh, no -- no, I didn't mean that at all.

McKIBBIN

He doesn't have the best farm plan, either, but he's working toward it. Remember that he's only been on this farm four years, and -- what's that old saying -- it's like a cat eating a grindstone, you have to take it by degrees.

JONES

Well put, Mac.

McKIBBIN

But Fred Geiger certainly has built that land up, and I'm confident he's going to continue to do so.

JONES

I think so too. Now, Mac -- what are some of the farming conditions in Noble County, and what are farmers doing about them?

McKIBBIN

Well, conditions are so diverse that I'm afraid I'll have to stick pretty much to generalizations. You see, we have both the high land, and the muck land. The muck, of course, was once swamp, and the main problem there is to prevent wind erosion, and to keep a good crop rotation to build up fertility. It's used mainly for alfalfa, mint, onions, and certain truck crops.

JONES

I understand that alfalfa and mint go hand in hand.

McKIBBIN

Yes, chiefly because they can use the same harvesting equipment. Well, on the high land, the big tendency right now is to go in for more dairying, and that means an intensified pasture development program. Noble County farmers are doing that. Woodland management is important of course.....

JONES

You mean, to protect the steeper hills from soil washing?

McKIBBIN

Partly that. We've been doing considerable tree planting, both in fields and in gullies. But farmers who operate their own peppermint oil distilleries, such as Fred Geiger, need a lot of wood for fuel, and that means that they should work out systematic woodland programs.

JONES

Well, what work have enrollees from the camp been doing lately, Mac?

1891

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... You see, we have ...
... of course, ...
... wind ...
... It is ...
... alone, ...

1892

... hand in hand.

1893

... harvest ...
... high land, ...
... and ...
... County ...
... of course...

1894

... from ...

1895

... Native ...
... and ...
... and ...
... work ...

McKIBBIN

Considerable tree planting, and that brings up the comparison of the Limberlost, again. Here was a region rich in trees, and now much of it is going back to trees. Then, too, here was a swampy region, and the camp, working with an organized drainage district on public land, is also doing considerable drainage work, which of course ties in with a broad land use program...

JONES

Putting each acre to its proper use.

McKIBBIN

That's it exactly.

JONES

How many farmers are cooperating with the Kendallville CCC camp?

McKIBBIN

About seventy at present, Ewing, and the number is increasing. Of course, that may not sound like a lot, but these farms act as show-windows. Other farmers see the soil-saving measures that are being demonstrated, and can put in their own soil conservation programs. And I want to say this much -- we've had some splendid cooperation from County Agent Bill Nye, and Ted Hile, the Noble County Triple-A chairman.

JONES

Men working together, in cooperation for conservation. Thanks a lot for being with us today, C. E. McKibbin, superintendent of the Kendallville, Indiana, CCC camp. And now, _____, please the "Eleventh Commandment."

ORGAN: Sneak in DEEP RIVER THEME.

ANNOUNCER

"Thou shall inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation. Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect thy hills from overgrazing by thy herds, so that thy descendants may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land thy fruitful fields shall become sterile stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendants shall decrease and live in poverty or be destroyed from off the face of the earth."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

#

1871

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1871